

Health information should be easy to understand and use

Everyone needs health information that is accessible to them. Accessible means easy to understand and use.

Health information is more accessible when it:

- uses words that you understand
- has different formats, like plain English, Easy Read, video and audio
- can be used with features and tools like captions for videos and screen readers.

The 3 question below can help you check if health information is accessible. Then there are ideas about what to do if health information is too hard for you.

Does the information use words you understand?

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Most people find it easier to understand short sentences and simple words.

Health information that is accessible:

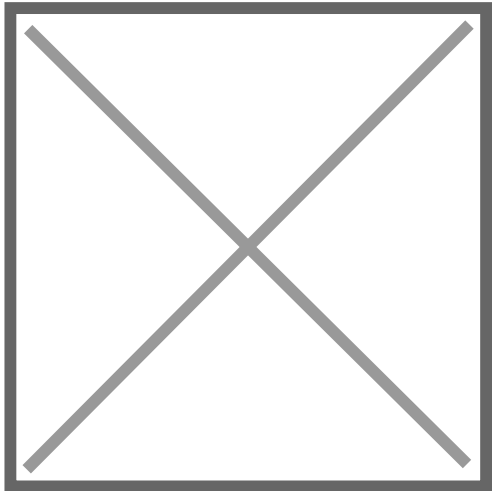
- leaves out difficult words unless you need to learn them
- explains difficult words
- uses images and examples to make things easier to understand.

Does the information come in different formats?

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Information can come in different formats, like plain English, Easy Read, videos and audio.

For example, at the top of this page, you can choose whether you want to read this article in plain English or Easy Read. The button that lets you choose looks like this:



You can use the button to choose the format that is right for you.

Our Health Space also has easy steps to help you listen to this page.

[How to hear the website read out loud](#)

Does the information have accessible features?

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Features like captions for videos and image descriptions can make health information easier to understand and use.

For example, the picture below has a description. The description says who and what is in the picture. On websites, descriptions like this are called “alt text”.

Alt text is usually not shown on the screen but can be read out loud. The alt text for this picture is "A person in a pink t-shirt using a wheelchair".

A person in a pink t-shirt using a wheelchair.

A person using text to voice or a screen reader will know what the image looks like, even if they can't see it.

What to do if health information is too hard for you

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If a health professional gives you information that you don't understand, ask to get the information a different way.

For example, you could say:

- "Can you give me this information in simple words?"
- "Is there a version of this information that is easier to read?"
- "Can you explain that again?"
- "Can you show me a video or picture?"

You have the right to health information that you can understand and use.

This resource is part of a series

[How to check if health information is good and right for you](#)

Everyone needs health information that is good and meets their needs, but it can be hard to know what information you can trust.

One of the ways you can get health information is from health resources. Health resources can be things like:

- fact sheets about a health problem
- guides that teach you how to do something good for your health
- videos that explain something about health
- apps that help you take care of your health.

Researchers asked people with intellectual disability, family members and health professionals what makes health resources good to use.

Together, they made a list to help people check health resources.

Resource Quality and Accessibility Checklist for People with Intellectual Disability and Their Supporters

We have used ideas from the [Checklist](#) to write about how you can check if health information is good and right for you. In the links below, you will find examples and practical advice to help build your knowledge and skills.

Often, the best information comes from a person who knows a lot about health and knows things about you too. For example, GPs and other health professionals give good health advice.

The advice we give here should be helpful to most people, but it is not specific to you. Talk to a health professional if:

- you are worried about your health
- you can't decide if some health information is good and right for you.

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This resource was made by

National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health

The [National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health](#) (the Centre) works to improve health services and the health system so people with intellectual disability can live their best, healthiest lives.

The Centre was funded by the Australian Government. It is part of the [National Roadmap for Improving the Health of People with Intellectual Disability](#).

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